

# A Message From The Commissioner

It is my pleasure to present the Cambridge Police Department's *2001 Annual Crime Report*. This is the sixth Annual Report produced during my tenure as Commissioner. The objective of this report is to give Cantabridgians a realistic view of their risks of victimization and provide detailed information on criminal activity. Armed with this knowledge, the Community and the Police Department can work together to develop effective strategies to ensure the quality of life and reduce fear in the City of Cambridge.

Cambridge recorded a slight 1% increase in serious crime in 2001. There were 30 additional serious crimes reported in Cambridge this year when compared with the 2000 index. This slight increase should be tempered by the fact that the 2001-crime total of 4,420 incidents represents the third lowest total recorded in the City since 1965. While there was a two percent increase in property crime in 2001, the ten percent decrease in violent crime drove the combined index for Murder, Rape, Robbery, and Assault to their lowest total in forty years. For the first time since 1960, there were fewer than 500 violent crimes recorded during the calendar year.

Serious crime in Cambridge has plummeted 53% since 1975 and 37% when compared with the 1990 statistics. The ebb and flow of crime is an ongoing, cyclical process. A case in point is the increase in housebreaks from 384 incidents to 553 in 2001. This percentage increase is substantial for this crime. We will wait for further analysis to determine if this is a statistical blip or an emerging trend. One of our major goals in 2002 will be to develop and prioritize new patrol and investigative strategies to combat this problem.

After the terror and tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup>, we all have come to the realization that we live in a different world. The art of policing has become an even more complex and complicated task. A partnership between the Police and the Community is essential if we are to regain our sense of security. Long-term solutions to crime, disorder, quality of life, and dispelling fear must be forged jointly by the community and police if they are to succeed. The information the community provides, the freshness of its ideas, and its assistance in identifying problems will empower the police in ensuring a safe and secure City of Cambridge.

As always, the Department plans to continue and enhance our commitment to making crime information available to the citizens of Cambridge. Our web site (<http://www.cambridgepolice.org>) provides timely information on current crime problems and other relevant information, while our scheduled community meetings give Cambridge residents a forum to discuss their crime and safety concerns.

The *2001 Annual Crime Report* is one of many resources the Cambridge Police Department provides to the citizens of Cambridge. In these pages, you will find detailed, relevant information—not just statistics—on crime issues affecting the city. We believe that we are in the top percentile of police departments in the nation in the quantity and quality of information that we provide to the public on a regular basis, and our *Crime Reports* have consistently won awards and accolades from international organizations. Behind this report is a firm policy of ensuring that the Cambridge community is a well-informed partner of the Cambridge Police Department and its efforts.

Ronnie Watson  
Police Commissioner